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RHEE CONTINUES HIS INFLEXIBLE TRUCE STAND

During the past week, President Rhee has continued to be inflexible and emotional on a truce which leaves Chinese troops in Korea. His current policy is apparently designed to obtain maximum commitments from the United States before an armistice is signed. His 12 June answer to a Swedish correspondent's question indicated that an armistice might be palatable if a bi-lateral US-South Korean security pact were immediately signed. This reflects Rhee's consistently-held belief that worthwhile understandings with the Communists cannot be obtained by political negotiations.

While it is believed that Rhee will reluctantly accept the UN-sponsored truce as a fait accompli, it is doubtful that South Korea will actually sign it and South Korean leaders are not expected ever to support it actively. Rhee can be expected repeatedly to embarrass the US, and he could make use of any of the following moves to undermine a truce: (1) refusal to sign an armistice; (2) refusal to withdraw South Korean troops from present battle lines; (3) opposing Indian troops with force; (4) unilaterally freeing UN-held prisoners, or (5) withdrawing South Korean troops from the UN Command.

Reports continue that the period up to 20 June is one of recruitment of soldiers, including women, for the "sacred war" against Communism, potential draftees have been ordered to return to the addresses from which they registered, and the Seoul Military District has ordered physicals for various classes of professional people. Foreign Minister Pyun, whom Rhee has apparently entrusted with heading-up the anti-truce campaign, continues to make provocative statements, although these are tempered with warnings against rash actions by either South Korea or the United Nations Command.

Nevertheless, the possibility that Rhee will actually take military action to secure unification is still regarded as highly unlikely at this time. He will probably respect his military advisers who reportedly have warned him that an advance of longer than three days' duration without UN support is futile. He has assured US officials twice that he would not resort to military action at this time, or without informing the UN. He is, after all, a realist and must be aware of certain "soft

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spots" in his position. These include the facts, as reported by Ambassador Briggs, that many legislators are dubious about the wisdom of Rhee's present stand and that the majority of the Korean people are ready to accept an armistice, even though disappointed over the country's continued division. Military action later on, particularly if the political conference provides for the withdrawal of foreign forces, should not be discounted, however.

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